Shortage of men, material and vessels in Coast Guard

791. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a significant shortage of men, material and vessels in the Coast Guard;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to provide enough men, material and vessels expeditiously to Coast Guard to face increased challenges to internal security posed by the increasing use of sea-lanes for terrorist movement, gun-running and narcotics smuggling; and

(c) whether Government propose to introduce any advanced technology to make the Coast Guard function more effectively and efficiently?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Men, material and vessels are provided by Government to the Coast Guard to meet all its essential operational requirements.

(c) Based on the tasks allotted, advanced technology equipment, are being inducted to make the Coast Guard function more efficiently and effectively.

Increase in lower age limit for recruitment of jawans

792. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Army has decided to increase the lower age limit of recruitment of jawans from 16 years to 17.5 years;

(b) if so, how this figure of 17.5 years has been worked out; and

(c) whether this is being done as UN Security Council Resolution has condemned the sending of soldiers below 18 years of age to the combat zone?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Keeping in view the decision of the State Parties to the UN Protocol on "Convention on the Rights of the Child" of which Government of India is a member, it has been decided to raise the minimum age for recruitment of jawans to 17.5 years.